

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

APPLICANTS: Foster et al.

SERIAL NO.: To be Assigned

FILED: This application is a divisional of 09/570,714 filed on May 15, 2000.

FOR: VEHICLE WITH LARGE PLANAR COMPOSITE PANELS

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO: 60,130-1126 (99MRA0205)

Assistant Commissioner of Patents & Trademarks  
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Please preliminarily amend the subject patent application as follows.

**IN THE SPECIFICATION**

Please insert the following paragraph before the first paragraph of page 1.

-- This application is a divisional of 09/570,714 filed on May 15, 2000. --

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please cancel claims 1-16 and add the following new claims 17-36.

17. (New) A method of forming a trailer panel for attachment to a vehicle trailer comprising the steps of:

- (a) placing a layer of colored material in a mold;
- (b) placing a layer of polymeric material in a mold;
- (c) integrally molding the layer of colored material and the layer of polymeric material as one piece to form a generally flat trailer panel; and
- (d) mounting the trailer panel to a trailer superstructure frame.

18. (New) The method according to claim 17 including the step of placing an inner layer into the mold prior to step (b) to form an inner surface of the trailer panel.

19. (New) The method according to claim 19 wherein step (a) includes placing a sheet of colored material into the mold to form an outer layer presenting an outer surface of the trailer panel, step (b) includes the step of injecting the polymeric material into the mold to form a central layer; and step (c) includes the step of integrally molding the inner layer, the central layer, and the outer layer as one piece prior to step (d).

20. (New) The method according to claim 19 wherein the outer layer comprises a paintless polymer film..

21. (New) The method according to claim 19 wherein the outer layer comprises a prepainted aluminum.

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22. (New) The method according to claim 19 wherein the polymeric material includes reinforcing fibers.

23. (New) The method according to claim 19 wherein the inner layer comprises a metallic material.

24. (New) The method according to claim 19 wherein the inner layer comprises a polymeric material.

25. (New) The method according to claim 19 including the step of injecting a layer of insulation into the mold.

26. (New) The method according to claim 19 including the step of injecting a structural support layer into the mold for forming at least one rib.

27. (New) The method according to claim 19 wherein step (d) includes forming a male member in one of the trailer superstructure frame or the trailer panel, forming a female member in the other of the trailer superstructure frame or the trailer panel, and inserting the female member into the male member.

28. (New) The method according to claim 27 including the steps of forming the female member as a tongue along at least one edge of the panel and forming the male member as a groove on the trailer superstructure frame.

29. (New) The method according to claim 19 wherein step (d) includes forming receiving holes in support beams of the trailer superstructure frame, mounting threaded fasteners to the trailer panel, and threading the fasteners into the receiving holes.

30. (New) The method according to claim 19 including the step of forming at least one wiring conduit in the trailer panel during step (c).

31. (New) The method according to claim 19 including the step of forming at least one electrical outlet in the trailer panel during step (c).

32. (New) A method of making panels to form a vehicle trailer comprising the steps of:

- (a) placing a layer of colored material in a mold;
- (b) placing a layer of polymeric material in a mold;
- (c) integrally molding the layer of colored material and the layer of polymeric material as one piece to form a generally flat trailer panel;
- (d) repeating steps (a) – (c) to form multiple trailer panels; and
- (e) mounting a plurality of trailer panels to a trailer superstructure frame to form a vehicle trailer.

33. (New) The method according to claim 32 including the step of placing an inner layer into the mold prior to step (b) to form an inner surface of the trailer panel.

34. (New) The method according to claim 33 wherein step (a) includes placing a sheet of colored material into the mold to form an outer layer presenting an outer surface of the trailer panel, step (b) includes the step of injecting the polymeric material into the mold to form a central layer; and step (c) includes the step of integrally molding the inner layer, the central layer, and the outer layer as one piece prior to step (e).

35. (New) The method according to claim 34 wherein step (e) includes providing the superstructure frame with multiple support beams spaced apart from one another to form a plurality of trailer panel installation positions and further includes the step of installing one trailer panel in each installation position.

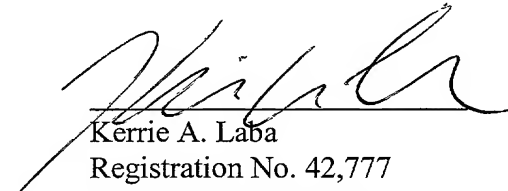
36. (New) The method according to claim 35 including forming a first mount at on the support beams at each installation position, forming a second mount on each trailer panel, and engaging the first and second mounts to secure each trailer panel to the superstructure frame.

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-16 have been cancelled. By the present amendment, Applicant has added new claims 17-36. Applicant respectfully requests examination of the claims.

It is believed that no additional fees are due, however, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482, in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds, for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,




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Dated: October 24, 2001

**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING**

I hereby certify that the enclosed Amendment is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to Assistant Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231, on this 24 th day of October, 2001.



Laura Combs

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